

# Winning War a World Away

**Colonel Jerry Johnson, U.S. Army, and  
Lieutenant Colonel James O. Kievit, U.S. Army, Retired**

**T**HE DESTRUCTION OF the Berlin Wall in 1989 marked the end of the Iron Curtain. Most Americans thought they would then live in a safer world. As during the peaceful interludes between World War I and World War II and between World War II and the Korean War, Americans thought the world's major problems had been solved. Even allowing for the Persian Gulf war, action in Somalia, operations in the Balkans, and increasing tensions around the world, most Americans still seemed to view the world as nonthreatening to their way of life. The terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 were a rude awakening. Once again, events demanded a rapid U.S. military response in multiple environments around the globe.

## **Vigilant Warriors '02**

From 21-26 April 2002, Vigilant Warriors '02, the third Army Transformation wargame, was conducted at the Army War College at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Set in the newly recognized geostrategic world, the wargame provided clear evidence that the Army's proposed Objective Force would expand the Nation's options for crisis response and conflict resolution in future operational and threat environments. The Objective Force would provide deployable, lethal, effective Army forces (ARFORs) that joint force commanders can use to defend against and defeat future threats to national security. Vigilant Warriors '02, specifically the resolution found in the Caspian scenario, demonstrated the utility of a full-spectrum capability; the importance of strategic and intra-theater lift; and the validity of retaining multiple levels of command and control (C2) to maximize joint force capabilities.

The wargame, set during the years 2019-2020, reflected a world consistent with the Joint Forces Command's (JFCOM's) Joint Vision 2020. The highly complex strategic environment included fail-

ing and failed states; increased terrorist and insurgent activities; resurgent radical movements involved with criminal activities, ethnic hatred, and genocide; and the emergence of a major political-military competitor to the United States.

At the beginning of the wargame, the Army found itself "on point for the nation," serving with joint forces in multiple areas around the world. Consequently, the game's design generated several political-military dilemmas around the world at the same time, including the Caspian region, Indonesia, the Balkans, Latin America, Korea, and America. These conflicts stressed the United States' ability to respond and they required full-spectrum capabilities of the proposed Objective Force operating within a joint, multinational, and interagency framework and using the leap-ahead improvements in deployability, sustainability, lethality, agility, survivability, versatility, and responsiveness.

One key game scenario, depicting a major regional war in the Caspian region, portrayed a theater of war in which the fictitious country of Anfar (insurgents, attacking with conventional forces, being supported by Iran) threatens the friendly country of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is producing oil for the United States and its allies and is home to thousands of Americans and friendly nationals. The Caspian scenario stretches lines of communication and causes the intervening U.S. force to operate at many levels along the spectrum of war, from humanitarian assistance and peace enforcement through intense, large-scale conventional hostilities in extremely difficult terrain and weather conditions.

Active-duty and retired flag officers from all services played key positions, including regional combatant commanders and joint task force (JTF) commanders for each of the regions. The game's combatant commander was a retired Army four-star general; active-duty two-star generals played the JTF

commander and the joint force land component commander (JFLCC).

The JFLCC had a mixture of Objective Force and legacy units allocated to him, including three Objective Force divisions, one legacy armored heavy division, one legacy armored cavalry regiment (ACR), and a Marine expeditionary brigade that participated during part of the operation. The JTF's complete force allocation included a mixture of joint forces he needed to accomplish the mission (Figure 1).

### Objective Force Capabilities

The Objective Force divisions posited improvements in responsiveness, deployability, agility, versatility, lethality, survivability, and sustainability that made them obviously superior to the legacy force and vitally important to the mission, which significantly challenged strategic and operational reach. During the wargame it became clear that future adversaries would find it much more difficult to defend against the more flexible Objective Force. But the Objective Force was important in this scenario not only for the advantages shown during force-on-force combat operations; its value was evident because it excelled at many missions along the spectrum from peace to combat.

One key issue in the wargame was how rapidly the joint force could solve the military aspects of the Caspian crisis. Speed was important because with the world in crisis and the quicker the JTF commander could bring resolution to the Caspian problem, the sooner resources committed to that mission would be available for other hotspots.<sup>1</sup>

Strategic and intra-theater lift proved to be two vital enablers for the Objective Force. Multiple wargames have shown this consistently since Army Chief of Staff General Eric K. Shinseki announced in 1999 that the Army would be transforming to an Objective Force.

Vigilant Warriors '02 included futuristic strategic enablers as well as conventional sealift and airlift platforms. In the Caspian scenario, the game's strategic lift, using a shallow-draft, high-speed ship, had the greatest effect on rapid force closure. The theater support vessel proved essential in one of the game's other scenarios because of its strategic-lift value and its ability to perform operational missions.

For operational maneuver, the game featured two possible future aerial platforms. One was the joint transport rotorcraft (JTR), a large rotary-wing aircraft capable of lifting one future combat system (FCS) vehicle to a range of 500 kilometers (km). The other was the advanced theater transport (ATT), a C-130-size super-short takeoff and landing (750

feet) aircraft with a 3,000-km range, which could lift two FCS vehicles. In the Caspian scenario, these systems provided the intra-theater lift. Their contribution to the Objective Force's flexibility, responsiveness, agility, versatility, lethality, and survivability proved significant.

The Objective Force's advantages, coupled to strategic and operational enablers, proved to be so evident that key leaders in the game asked what might have happened if the JTF had been made up entirely of Objective Forces. They also wondered what would have happened if that total Objective Force JTF had possessed additional intra-theater lift capabilities. Accordingly, although not a part of the original game design, players in the Caspian scenario

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quickly analyzed two additional vignettes: the JTF Caspian with the intra-theater lift in the original game design but with all Objective Force maneuver units (rather than any legacy units) and the JTF Caspian with both all-Objective Force maneuver units and an increase in intra-theater lift.<sup>2</sup>

The deployment timeline in the original game-design case (see figure 2) shows that the 13th Objective (OBJ) Division (Div) closed at C+8, the 15th OBJ Div closed at C+15, the 54th OBJ Div closed at C+18, and combat operations began at C+26. Two legacy units, the ACR and the legacy division, did not complete full closure until C+39. However, the JFLCC and the JTF commander assessed that they had a correlation of forces high enough to win, and they initiated the attack rather than wait for legacy units to completely close. The legacy units, of course, made significant contributions to the campaign, but they did not provide the flexible advantages that Objective Force units displayed.

Combat operations began not at full closure of all the forces but while legacy units were still flowing in. Legacy units could not flow in as quickly as Objective Force units could. This was not ideal, but the JFLCC could not wait. Once the JFLCC felt he had obtained force ratios capable of defeating the enemy, he began the attack, but at a lower chance for success.

Figure 1.

## Caspian Scenario Force Allocation

### JFMCC

**Navy**  
CVBG  
ARG  
NCW Forces  
**Marine**  
MEB  
MEU (SOC)  
MPSRON (MPF(F))

### Theater

TSC MSSP  
HQ, MED COM (Theater)  
Medical Bde (EAC)  
Army Signal Element  
Theater Cmd Avn Bn  
ADA Bde  
2 X Patriot Bn  
1 X THAAD Bn  
ENCOM (3 Grps/12 Bns)  
MI Bde  
MP Bde (CS) (6 Bns)  
MP Bde (I/R)  
Chemical Bde (6 Bns)  
Space Element  
CID Grp

### JFLCC

(Objective Force Corps)  
2 X Obj Div (3 Bdes)  
1 X Obj Div (2 Bdes)  
1 X Legacy Hvy Div (3 Bdes)  
1 X ACR (Legacy) (CONUS)  
Corps HQ  
Corps Arty HQ  
Fires Bde  
EN Bde (5 Grps/14 Bns)  
MI Bde  
SIG Element  
ADA Bde (incl 1 MEAD Bn)  
Chemical Bde (5 Bns)  
MP Bde (4 Bns)  
Air CAV Aslt Bde  
AVE Bde (Atk)  
AVN Bde (Aslt)  
1 X ESF C  
1 X ESF B  
MEDCOM  
MED Bde

### JCMOTE

CA Cmd HQ (-) (RC)  
2 X CA Bde HHC (RC)  
6 X CA Bn (RC)  
1 X CA (FID/Bn) (RC)  
1 X CA Co (AC)

### JFACC

2 X AEFs  
AAMBC (Coordination)

### JSOTE

Theater SF COM (Fwd)  
2 X SFOG  
6 X OBD w/ Spt & Avn  
Ranger Bn  
NAVALSW Grp (-)  
2 X SEAL TMs  
2 X NSW Unit Dets  
Special Boat Sqdn (-)  
1 X Special Boat Unit  
1 X PC  
1 X ASDS  
1 X SSGN (SOF)

### JSOAC

AF SO Group  
1 X Spec Tactics Sqdn  
1 X SO Wing (ANG) (-)  
1 X SOAV  
1 X SOAB Spt Bn  
UAV

### JPOTF

PSYOP GRP HQ (-)  
4 X PSYOPS Bns

## Operation Transition to Peackeeping — Forces Required

### CJTF Azerbaijan

HQ—DCG, ASCC, or TSC Cdr  
**ESF(T)(-) (Group size—2500)**  
To support other services  
Re-equip Azeri's  
Support DC's, EPWs, etc.  
Support corps/division redeployment  
EOD support

### Engineer Group (3 x Bns—1800)

Infrastructure repair  
Support CMO

### Intelligence (MI Bn—300)

### JSOTF (2 Bns—500)

Train Azeri's  
Continue SR (if needed)

### JPOTF (Psyop Bn—300)

Continue Psyops

### JCMOTF (6 x CA Ogs, Bn size—1000)

Continue CMO  
Limited HA

### Aviation Element (500)

Tactical lift (Bn)  
Attack helos (Co)

### Chemical (Bn—400)

### TAMD Element (500)

Early warning  
**MP Bde (3 x Bns—1800)**  
EPW (residual)  
I/R

### Medical Bn (300)

Support to residual force  
Support to EPWs

### QRF (750)

Security response (Bn+)

### C4 (500)

Signal element (EAC Bn+)

Whether to wait for all of the legacy forces to flow in was not the only issue. The JFLCC had to fight somewhat sequentially—some might say piecemeal—at the tactical level because he only had the capability to lift one combat battalion each day, given the distances that air assault units would have to travel to attack. Even to accomplish this, 127 JTRs and 64 ATTs were used. This provided the capability to lift one combat FCS Objective Force battalion. With these assets, bold and aggressive tactics were more successful than they would be today thanks to the Objective Force's increased command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) capabilities and the posited flexibility advantages and protection of FCS-capable units. In this scenario, the joint force took 86 days to complete its mission (C+86).

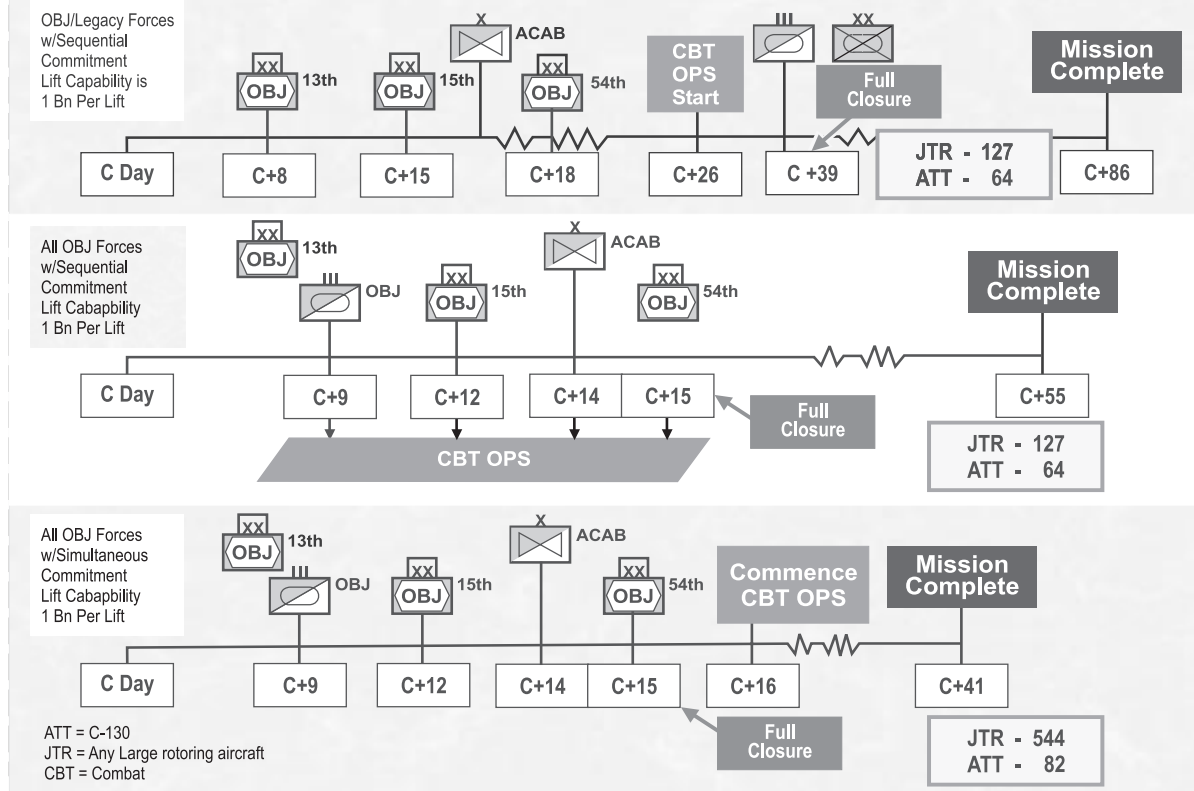
The timeline for the first excursion vignette is shown in the light gray portion of figure 2. This ex-

cursion looked at what might have happened if the Army combat force consisted entirely of Objective Force units that began attacking sequentially starting at C+9 once the first two Objective Force units, the 13th Division and the ACR, closed. Again, this decision to go sequentially, or piecemeal, was made because ARFORs still only had the capability to lift one Objective Force combat battalion each day. In this first additional vignette, players assumed the same intra-theater lift asset availability—127 JTRs and 64 ATTs. Given this situation, the estimate for mission completion was 55 days (C+55).

The medium-gray portion of figure 2 shows the timeline for the second excursion vignette. This is the estimate of results with a total Objective Force flowing in and also an increase in intra-theater lift capability to 544 JTRs and 82 ATTs. Given the distances of travel to air assault objectives, this equates to an increase from one battalion lift per day to one brigade lift per day. This extra intra-theater capabil-

Figure 2.

## Caspian Intra-theater Lift Comparison



ity gives more agility to the force, increasing its ability to conduct simultaneous attacks. The extra capability would also enable the ground force commander to be much bolder. He could confront the enemy with a force that would quickly overwhelm and defeat the enemy. The JTF commander could leverage this increased capability to attack in a more simultaneous manner across the breadth and depth of the theater immediately after full closure. Analysis predicted that the capability to lift one brigade per day would reduce the time to complete the mission even further, to only 41 days (C+41).

Analysis of the scenario, including the two extra vignettes, confirms operational lift as a critical enabler of Objective Force capabilities. If the force in the Caspian scenario would have had more Objective Force units enabled by additional JTRs and ATTs, the campaign could have been finished in less than half the time.<sup>3</sup> The key consideration is the correct mix of forces and enablers.

Of course there is a cost to creating additional enhanced capability forces and lift assets. To determine their true value, therefore, one must consider the cost in days of combat operations versus the cost overall to the Nation to produce such a capable force. Would it cost the Nation more to procure the

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extra lift or to extend the campaign from 41 days of intense combat to 86 days? A longer campaign length almost certainly makes it much more expensive in terms of logistics and lives.

Considering the effect of American lives lost is especially important. From a training standpoint, the Battle of Kasserine Pass in North Africa collected a toll in lives in payment for being ill prepared. The destruction of Task Force Smith in Korea collected a toll for unpreparedness from an equipment and materiel perspective. Even Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm took a toll, albeit smaller, for inadequate identification-friend-or-foe preparedness. Clearly, being ill prepared for the next war, regardless of the specific nature of that unpreparedness, costs precious lives.



Americans are willing to accept casualties in defense of national interests, but the possibility of paying such a price needlessly through unpreparedness is unacceptable and supports the need to invest now in developing, fielding, and training flexible, adaptable, full-spectrum-capable military forces.

## Implications for Command Echelons

The Caspian scenario clearly demonstrated that synchronization and management complexities of warfare in the future threat environment strongly support the need for multiple and flexible levels of C2 to maximize the future joint force's capabilities. Command and control and seamless integration of joint and coalition operations in a vastly expanded, noncontiguous battlespace were multifaceted and had an increased need for seamless integration of simultaneous air-ground operations.

Even though the Army has yet to define all levels of command resident within the Objective Force, draft Objective Force concepts, as used in Vigilant

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A 20th Infantry Regiment Stryker at the Yakima Training Center, Washington.

Warriors '02, employ a functional framework in which units of employment (UE) perform tasks currently assigned to divisions and higher Army headquarters. UE link ground and joint forces and orchestrate ground operations that decide joint campaigns. UE are the basis of combined arms air-ground task forces, and they have the capacity to assume command of JTFs. They resource and execute combat operations; designate objectives; coordinate with multiservice, interagency, multinational, and nongovernment activities; and employ long-range fires, aviation, and sustainment while providing C4ISR and tactical direction to the next lower echelon—units of action (UA).

UA are the tactical warfighting echelons of the Objective Force and are similar to brigades and battalions. Maneuver UAs are the smallest combined arms units committed independently. Objective Force UA can initiate decisive combat at a chosen time and place. They continue to develop the situation in contact and to integrate maneuver; fires; reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition (RSTA); and the layered and integrated network of information and communication capabilities.

The brigade, as the highest level of UA command and control in Vigilant Warriors '02, assigned missions; shaped actions beyond and between battalion engagements; integrated external intelligence, organic RSTA assets, and long-range fires; filled gaps in battalion capabilities; and set conditions for tactical success. During the decisive-operations phase of the Caspian scenario, the Objective Force brigade's value was clear when it directed the continuous integration of small, powerful tactical units moving along multiple, noncontinuous axes to objective areas while simultaneously engaging the adversary with organic, overmatching, and precise supporting fires. Combined with the joint force's other capabilities, these actions led to the defeat and disintegration of enemy forces.

In a fighting force, the C2 headquarters processes intelligence and combat information and directs operations that maximize a combat unit's killing capabilities. Detailed planning and execution accomplish this, and the devil is in those details. Reducing a C2 headquarters' analytical and planning power when the goal is coordinating and synchronizing operations does not make sense. Using information technology to streamline operations, share information, and plan and execute collaboratively maximizes Army headquarters elements' capabilities in the field. However, Vigilant Warriors '02 shows that there is a natural division



The USAV *Spearhead*, a U.S. Army theater support vessel, arrives at a port in the Central Command area of operations, 27 January 2003.

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of labor for multiple levels of Army UE echelons.

The Army Service Component Command (ASCC) (often designated as a numbered Army) performs missions vital to the combatant commander. The ASCC provides a regionally focused headquarters that is able to execute many functions, from supporting security cooperation in peacetime to forming the core element of a JTF in war.

The ASCC commander can also act as the JFLCC. If there are multiple corps in an operation, then the choice of the ASCC as the JFLCC headquarters is more appropriate. In this wargame, where there was only a single Army corps directing subordinate units, the corps commander acted as the JFLCC.

The ASCC normally performs many theater-strategic functions often grouped together under the title of Army Support to Other Services. These functions include ground-based air defense; theater-level logistics; nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) detection and decontamination; joint rear area security; and other responsibilities, depending on the situation and threat.

Normally, the goal of combat operations is to tran-

sition from warfighting to peace-enforcement and finally back to peace. During times of transition, particularly when the operation is changing from a U.S.-led coalition combat operation to a multinational or international peace-enforcement operation, the ASCC is the natural headquarters to oversee transition operations.

Retaining a major headquarters is a necessity because of the estimated force requirement for 11,000 soldiers and even more so to satisfy the requirement to coordinate with multiple coalition partners. The transition phase is an important part of any operation, and if not done properly, the United States can find itself mired in a situation from which it might not be able to extract itself for years or even decades. The major advantage in the game of keeping C2 at the ASCC level was that it freed up corps and division UEs to re-deploy rapidly to fight in other theaters of war.

When the corps acts as a UE, it has many valuable capabilities. Although the corps staff as designed today does not usually have the breadth or depth to maintain the overall regional focus required of an ASCC while also training and preparing for its



An Abrams tank struck by a depleted uranium round is roped off with yellow tape and a radiation containment marking, March 1991.

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wartime contingencies, it does possess sufficient abilities to perform as a JTF, JFLCC, or an ARFOR headquarters, depending on mission requirements. A corps-level UE is the primary integrator of U.S. and multinational multidimensional operational and tactical capabilities in combined and joint campaigns. It enables and shapes subordinate air-ground task force operations and sustains as well as provides full-dimensional protection for mission-tailored units.

One question came up during the wargame: "If the ASCC no longer existed as a C2 headquarters, what effect would that have on V Corps?" Most likely, the corps UE commander and staff would be encumbered by serving in four roles simultaneously: as the regional Army headquarters for the U.S. Army's European Command's area of responsibility; as the coalition JTF for unified operations in the Caspian joint operational area; as the combined or JFLCC for conducting land operations; and as the ARFOR for administrative C2 support of all Army units. The corps commander and staff would likely reach mission overload, and the combat engagement or management focus would be diluted.

In the Caspian scenario, however, there was an ASCC UE. An active-duty major general (MG) portrayed the ASCC commander and as such was appointed by the combatant commander to be the Caspian JTF commander. The ASCC commander's

focus on the conduct and support of the overall campaign freed the corps commander to focus attention on obtaining maximum effect from and during ground operations fully integrated within the overall combined and joint application of military power.

A division UE has many of the same capabilities as the corps UE, but on a smaller scale. In a smaller scale contingency, the division UE can function as a JTF, JFLCC, or ARFOR. The division UE's primary function is as the execution echelon for decisive operations in major combat operations in a major theater of war. When tailored with capabilities depending on the situation and the threat (for example, additional air defense elements, field artillery brigades, and attack and lift helicopters), as it was in the Caspian scenario, a division UE can also enable and shape subordinate UA operations.

A debate continues in the Department of Defense whether functions in some Army headquarters are redundant and whether spaces or even complete headquarters echelons can go away. Vigilant Warriors '02 provides strong support for the Army's keeping all currently planned UE-level C2 headquarters. Players accepted that there is a need to examine further the exact composition of each of those echelons, but they clearly believe that robust capability at each level should be retained.

## Advantages

Vigilant Warriors '02 is perhaps the most comprehensive look yet at what Army Transformation and the Objective Force can contribute to the defense of the Nation. The game unmistakably demonstrated the strategic utility of an Objective Force capable of full-spectrum dominance. The Caspian scenario particularly highlighted the strategic and operational maneuver advantages of Objective Force elements as well as the importance of adequate availability of strategic and operational lift enablers.

Vigilant Warriors '02 also verified the advantages provided the joint force by multiple levels of Army C2 structures such as the current ASCC, corps, division, and brigade headquarters. The Army provides certain unique functions and capabilities to the joint force, regardless of theater. A regionally focused command, the ASCC can best provide theaterwide leadership for ground warfighting functions and for warfighting support activities such as theater-level logistics; support to displaced citizens; and control and support of enemy prisoners of war. Furthermore, the ASCC's staff has greater breadth and depth to plan for and control humanitarian assistance; infrastructure repair; explosive ordnance and demolitions support; civil-military operations; training allies through the foreign internal defense programs of apportioned Army special forces units; psychological operations; ground-based air defense early warning and defense forces; signal support; chemical and biological detection and decontamination; intelligence activities; medical support; military police support; and the employment of ground and heliborne rapid reaction forces.

Vigilant Warriors '02 demonstrated that the existing multiple echelons of C2 (ASCC, corps, division, brigade, and so on) give the Army a flexible, adaptive capability to react to demands for battle and sustainment leadership and management in an international security environment that will only become

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more complex. Eliminating any one of the C2 levels at the UE level would complicate immensely the missions of the remaining command echelons and make the Army less flexible and responsive to the needs of national security. Any thoughtful discussion of this issue must begin by recognizing that the functions themselves would not go away. Instead, they would have to be absorbed at another level, and every level already has its own major functions to perform.

While additional analyses remain to be conducted, Vigilant Warriors '02 showed manifestly that Army Transformation is on the right path in pursuing Objective Force capabilities. To respond rapidly and effectively when called on by the Nation, the Army must continue to aggressively pursue its Transformation campaign and the Objective Force. As part of that effort, future Army Transformation wargames can serve as vital venues producing insight into how to sustain and improve the Army's capabilities; demonstrate its inescapable strategic relevance; and ensure that the Army retains its position as the premier ground force in the world. **MR**

## NOTES

1. This situation is similar to the Europe First strategy adopted during World War II whereby forces were to hold in the Pacific while the United States defeated Axis forces in Europe as quickly as possible to be followed by defeat of the Japanese in the Pacific.

2. There was no change to strategic-lift availability for these excursions. Available strategic lift was constant across all cases.

3. COL John Bonin points out an additional aspect, one that was not well discussed during the game itself; that is, who provides JTRs and ATTs? While it might

be assumed the Air Force would provide ATTs, it is likely that the Army would need to procure JTRs. To provide the design case (127 JTRs) for the scenario at an operations readiness (OR) rate of 90 percent would require a theater aviation transport group of 144 JTRs. The increased lift excursion (544 JTRs) would require a theater aviation transport brigade of four groups of 144 each JTRs (or 576 total at 94.4 percent OR). Also, this number of aircraft would require substantial, dedicated logistic support.

*Colonel Jerry Johnson is Director, Department of the Army Support Branch, Center for Strategic Leadership, at the U.S. Army War College (AWC). He received a B.S. from the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) and an M.S. from Indiana University. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) and AWC. He has served in various command and staff positions in the continental United States, Germany, and South Korea.*

*Lieutenant Colonel James O. Kievit, U.S. Army, Retired, is an associate professor of National Security Leadership at the Center for Strategic Leadership at AWC, where he works Army futures issues with the Headquarters, DA, Support Branch. He received a B.S. from USMA, an M.S. and an M.A. from the University of Michigan, and he is a graduate of CGSC, where he received an M.M.A.S. from the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies.*